

The Worry Control Workbook

CHAPTER 8 Controlling Worries About Health and Safety Issues

The state of one's health is a constant worry for many of us, accompanying us on our journey through life. These worries tend to change and, sometimes, intensify as we age.

This study participant says her health is excellent in spite of her worries:

Obviously I am paying attention to clues about aging that I see all around me rather than maintaining confidence in my good health. It's unsettling to see others my age having problems! I see my doctor -- not often, because I can't afford it. I try to pay attention to diet, exercise, and avoiding stress. I make sure to stay in touch with the healing power of the world of nature.

Another participant feels that:

Health and well-being, when you don't have it, is a major cause of worry. If you can't function on a certain level, then everything becomes hard to cope with. It's all fear. And all grist for the mill to work with. Illness and suffering changes you, your outlook and approach to life. My health was really bad at one point so that has influenced me. Perhaps I worry less because things aren't so bad now in comparison, but perhaps I worry because I know how bad it can be to have bad health.

The downside is almost everyone seems to worry excessively about their health. The upside is there is a lot you can do about it. Gone are the old days when we expected our physician to know the answers to all of our health problems. Today we know that the state of our health is up to us. What can be done to control worry about health issues?

Educate Yourself

The number one thing cited by people in the study as a way to address and relieve health worries is to educate yourself. While it may take some research, effort and time to find the answers you are looking for, the sources of available information are expanding rapidly. They include:

- libraries
- book stores
- resource books
- the internet/world wide web (You can "bookmark" sites on the internet that you have found to be most valuable so you can easily access them again. Download articles of most interest in case they are removed before your return.)
- 800, 888 and 900 informational numbers
- health focused newsletters and magazines
- classes, courses, workshops and seminars
- support groups
- health care professionals

The following is a story from my own life which illustrates the importance of educating yourself about all aspects of health related issues.

In 1976, I went to a doctor for the first time to address the issue of my recurring deep depressions. The doctor diagnosed and put me on a medication which I took daily, without fail, for ten years. I didn't really know what the medication did, what it could do to my body, when I should and shouldn't take it, or anything else that was necessary to keep me from inadvertently harming myself. My lack of education was eventually my "downfall".

I continued to take my medication when I had a stomach bug that had dehydrated my body. My body, without fluids, received a toxic overload which, if it had not been treated immediately, could have been fatal.

Now, before I take any medication, I learn about it. I look it up in consumer friendly books about medications and in the Physicians Desk Reference. Sometimes, once I've read about a medication, I decide not to take it. If I do take it, I do it with appropriate respect for what it can and can't do, and how I need to manage it.

When any health problem comes up for me now, I begin a research project. If I'm too sick to do it, a family member or friend is often willing to undertake the task. The Internet has become a very valuable resource for me in this process.

If you are considering taking a medication, the following form will help you learn all you can about any recommended medications, so you won't get into the same kind of trouble I did. You can make copies of this form to have available whenever you are considering taking a medication.

Questions to Ask the Doctor About Medication

generic name _____ product name _____
product category _____ suggested dosage level _____

How does this medication work? What do you expect it to do?

How long will it take to achieve that result? _____

What are the risks associated with taking this medication?

What kind of an effectiveness track record does this medication have?

What short term side effects does this medication have?

What long term side effects does this medication have?

Is there any way to minimize the chances of experiencing these side effects? _____

If so, what are they?

Are there any dietary or lifestyle suggestions or restrictions when using this medication?

Why do you recommend this particular medication?

Have you had other patients that have used it? _____ If so, how have they done?

How is this medication monitored?

What tests will I need prior to taking this medication?

How often will I need these tests while taking the medication?

What symptoms indicate that the dosage should be changed or the medication stopped?

Where can I get more information about this medication?

Ask the physician if she/he has any printed information on this medication you can have to study.

As part of the process of educating yourself, develop a health care file so you have quick access to pertinent information when you need it. It can be in a standard file cabinet or drawer, but a "milk crate" or a sturdy cardboard box can work just as well. File folders facilitate easy access of specific information. This file includes:

- health related information you have compiled,
- copies of articles and information you have downloaded from the internet,
- copies of your health records (which belong to you and must be given to you by your physician) and all test results,
- back issues of related magazines and newsletters.

"I need to educate myself about _____ (name health problem, issue, treatment or medication.) I am going to do it by:"

Professional Help and Support

A general health care practitioner who knows you and your life circumstances can assist you in monitoring your health, giving you advice on treatment, providing treatment when necessary and referring you to other health care providers when necessary. A study participant said, "I try to always have a health practitioner that I can turn to and ask questions, someone who knows me well, can assess my situation well and give good suggestions for treatment".

An annual check-up with this physician is in your best interest. Filling out the following form in advance of your visit, and giving a copy to the doctor at the time of your visit will help the physician do any detective work needed to get to the bottom of health related problems. Save copies of this form in your health file. Have copies of this form available for subsequent visits.

Information for the Physician

1. All medications, vitamins and health care preparations you are using for any reason.

Medication Dosage When and How Used

2. A medical history of yourself and your family

Your history

Mother's Side of the Family

Father's side of the Family

3. Describe changes in:

appetite or diet _____

weight _____

sleep patterns _____

sexual interest _____

ability to concentrate _____

memory _____

Have you recently had:

____ headaches (describe)

____ numbness or tingling anywhere (where)

____ loss of balance (describe)

____ double vision or vision problems (describe)

____ periods of amnesia (describe)

____ coordination changes (describe)

____ weakness in arms or legs (describe)

____ fever (describe)

____ nausea or diarrhea (describe)

____ other gastrointestinal problems (describe)

____ fainting or dizziness (describe)

____ seizures (describe)

____ stressful life events (describe)

Add additional sheets for other pertinent information

Don't be satisfied with the outcome of your visit until all your questions have been answered, and you feel comfortable with the answers and with suggested treatment strategies. If necessary, arrange follow-up visits. If treatment is recommended, especially if it is serious or requires surgery, get a second opinion. Don't "worry" about hurting your doctor's feelings. This is accepted practice. If you have specific medical problems, your physician may refer you to a medical professionals such as a:

- neurologist
- endocrinologist
- oncologist
- gastroenterologist
- ophthalmologist
- nutritionist
- psychiatrist
- surgeon
- gynecologist
- urologist
- cardiologist
- dermatologist
- orthopedist

In addition to getting advice, assistance and treatment from medical professionals, many people reach out to a wide variety of other health care practitioners for help maintaining good health and to deal with specific health problems. The most commonly mentioned were:

- naturopathic physicians: doctors who specialize in a holistic treatment style including vitamin and mineral supplementation and dietary recommendations
- homeopathic physician: doctors who specialize in treatment of illness with homeopathic remedies, which are actually very minute quantities of substances that could cause symptoms similar to those you are experiencing if taken in large amounts. (see chapter 12, Hidden Possible Causes of Overwhelming Worry)
- acupuncturists: practitioners of an eastern form of treatment who use thin needles to stimulate various points on the body to achieve relief from symptoms.
- chiropractors: health care professionals whose focus is to help the body heal itself through spinal alignment and other non-invasive means.

Recently, complaints about lack of timely access to health care providers, refusal of treatment, dangerously short hospital stays and limited choice of providers have been increasing at an alarming rate. The only way these issues can be addressed satisfactorily is if we all let our providers and elected officials know that current trends in the provision of health care services are not acceptable and are often dangerous.

Poor treatment from health care professionals increases worry and compromises your wellness. You have a right to high quality care. You also have a right to be treated with dignity, compassion and respect at all times. If you feel you are not getting high quality care and are not being treated well, tell your health care professional.

If you still don't get the care and treatment you deserve, use a different person or, if that is not possible, contact your state Department of Protection and Advocacy (every state has such an agency) for assistance.

The following story about a very difficult health care situation, which was causing her a great deal of worry, was shared by a study participant:

Gradually I noticed that I was getting more and more tingling and feelings of numbness all over my body, which, although they weren't painful, were frightening. I contacted my doctor who was less than responsive. He said my symptoms were the result of arthritis in my neck, although I protested that I didn't have any neck pain.

Over time the numbness and tingling became more intense, was increasingly accompanied by chronic muscle pain, and severe muscle cramping and I had hot, painful areas in various places on my body. I did a search on the internet and discovered that there were many possible causes of these symptoms, including multiple sclerosis. I reported this to my physician and was told in no uncertain terms that it was "all in my head". When I took a friend with me to a doctor's appointment, the doctor told me he wouldn't allow anyone else in the room while we were discussing my situation (the doctor was totally out of order on this). I ended my relationship with this physician and began a search for a doctor that would address my symptoms to my satisfaction.

Through following up on a variety of leads, I found a good doctor who gave me an accurate diagnosis (fibromyalgia), referred me to several different specialists and began a course of treatment.

In addition I began a search for information on this little understood condition and discovered that there were many things I could do for myself including making dietary changes and undertaking a very specialized exercise regime.

Now, two years later, with careful management, most of these symptoms are a thing of the past. If I had listened to my first doctor, I might have spent some time in a psychiatric hospital, be taking an antidepressant medication, still be experiencing debilitating pain and still very, very worried about my future.

Get Support

When dealing with health related issues, worries increase if you try to go through it alone. Close family members and friends who are validating and affirming and with whom you can discuss these issues can provide relief and diversion from worry, as well as additional practical information and advice.

A study participant relates:

When I was having a really hard time with recurring severe headaches, my sister and several close friends made all the difference. Without them I am not sure I would have persisted until I found relief. I was tired of visiting health care professionals who didn't seem to understand the effect of these headaches on my life.

Supporters can help by:

- accompanying you to health care appointments,
- providing reassurance, encouragement, information and advice,
- seeking additional information when you can't do this for yourself,
- listening when you need someone to talk to,
- providing you with care when you can't care for yourself.

Stories of support shared by study participants include:

My wife has a chronic illness -- Fibromyalgia -- which limits what she can do. I learned about FMS and try to help her when she is suffering.

I was going into the hospital for testing and diagnosis of a frightening skin lesion. My doctor had explained the possibilities and frankly, I was scared. My wife went with me to the hospital and stayed with me until I got the "all clear". Then she took me home, cooked me my favorite dinner and pampered me through the evening.

Who could support you if you were trying to deal with a health problem?

How could they help?

Often others will not realize you need help, or, if they do realize you need help, will not know what to do. Good friends and family members are usually more than willing to provide care if they know what would be helpful. This is the time to let go of old attitudes about taking care of yourself. Ask supporters for help and then tell them exactly what you need them to do. It's so much better than having them wondering what to do. You can always return the favor when you're feeling better and they are having a hard time.

Acceptance and/or Attitude Changes

You may have a health care condition that cannot be changed, or one in which the outcome is uncertain. You can spend a lot of time engrossed in useless worry about such a circumstance. Once you have done everything you can to address, treat and make adjustments relative to the situation, it's time for letting go, accepting or making a significant change in attitude to control your worry and make your life more comfortable and enjoyable. (Denial has not been found to be useful in these instances.)

Examples of such negative thoughts or attitudes and positive statements that can be repeated to counteract negative or detrimental thoughts or attitudes include:

Negative Thought Positive Counter-statement

"My life is over." "My life is different but well worth living."

"I can't deal with this." "I'm doing the best I can to deal with this effectively."

"This will just get worse and worse." "I'll deal with whatever happens."

"Why me?" "Difficult things happen to everyone."

"I'll never be happy again." "I am happy."

"This is intolerable." "I can live with this."

"I'll never be able to do the things

I enjoy again." "I will continue to do the things I enjoy."

An affirmation that others have found helpful is:

I will address these symptoms systematically, do what I can to address and relieve them, and will spend the rest of my time thinking about and doing things that make my life enjoyable.

List things you would enjoy doing rather than thinking negative thoughts about a health condition:

"I am leading a happy, productive life in spite of _____." (Fill in with whatever health condition you have, such as blindness, deafness, the inability to walk, diabetes, AIDS, etc.)

List health related negative thoughts and attitudes that cause or increase your worry and positive statements that counteract them.

Negative thought or attitude Positive statement

Once you have determined positive statements that will counteract negative thoughts and attitudes, repeat them over and over when the negative thoughts and attitudes come up, when you first get up in the morning, before you go to bed at night, and anytime you have a few minutes during the day. Repeat them aloud when possible. Write them over and over. Journal about them. Write the positive statements on post-it stickies, put them in various places around your home and read them aloud or to yourself whenever you see them. Make big signs as reminders to hang in key places like on the refrigerator door or on the back of the bathroom door. With persistence you will notice that your thoughts and attitudes become more positive and you will be worrying less.

Refer to chapter 11 for more information on changing negative thoughts to positive ones and check the reference books in the resource list in the Appendix.

A woman reported that she had melanoma 25 years ago. After the surgery and treatment, everything checked out well. She realized that she had to accept that that is the most she'll know for now and go on with life. She got regular checkups, looked to the positive, and refused to stew in it. She directed her mind to live in the present and not imagine "stuff".

Another woman said:

I worry some about getting depressed, but I know that it's one place where the worry can bring it on. I stop myself from worrying by interrupting the thinking; and yet I also plan to work up a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (a symptom monitoring and response plan -- see under Resources). This kind of worry is only going to be useful if it gets me to do something.

Take Good Care of Yourself

Taking good care of yourself is the best pro-active strategy for maintaining wellness and reducing worry about health related issues. It's different for everyone. Each of us can benefit from focusing on what we need to do to keep ourselves healthy and then making a concerted effort to do these things regularly.

A study participant reports:

I make an effort to eat well, walk 6-10 miles a week, practice meditation 10 minutes a day, and take a weekly yoga class. I bathe every day, wear fresh clothes, look well, and sleep about 6 hours a night. I eat 3 meals a day. I do not eat red meat, smoke, drink alcohol or abuse other substances.

It is beneficial to develop a list for keeping track of those things you need to do on a daily basis to attain the highest level of wellness possible. Post the list in a convenient place and check it daily to make sure you are doing everything possible to keep yourself well. Following is an example of such a list:

- eat three balanced meals
- eat small healthy snacks between meals
- drink six glasses of water
- avoid the excessive use of sugar and processed, highly salted, or fatty foods
- avoid caffeine
- avoid smoking and second hand smoke
- exercise for half an hour
- spend at least one half hour involved in a creative, affirming or fun activity
- spend at least one half hour with positive affirming people

In addition, you may want to ask yourself the following questions every day:

- Do I need to see my doctor or some other health care professional?
- Do I need to set up an appointment with one of my health care professionals?
- Is there a symptom or health problem that I need to address?
- Do I need to get more rest or sleep?
- Would I feel better if I got a massage?
- Do I need some extended exercise?

Use this space to develop your own daily maintenance list.

Daily Maintenance List

List those things you need to do daily to stay well.

Questions you need to ask yourself daily

Get Rid of Habits that are Detrimental to Good Health

Numerous study participants felt that they could let go of worries about health related issues if they could give up some bad habits that they feel compromise their chances for long term wellness. The three top concerns are smoking, substance abuse, and poor eating habits (eating too much, too little or the wrong thing).

Study participants reported the following:

I have 10+ years of non-drinking with the help of AA, 9 years on Oct. 17, 1997 of non-smoking due to a hospital program -- both worked but it was not an easy process -- I would like to do the same for food, but cannot stop.

I try not to think about this, but the truth is that I'm concerned about being too heavy. I've tried a zillion things from diets to hypnosis. I'd like to eat a healthy way and not think about weight, but I'm a food addict.

These three (weight, appearance, and addictions) all go together for me. If I could control the amount I eat, I could lose weight and I would look better.

I have taken a "life steps" course at a hospital to lose 25 lbs. It worked for a while. I wish I could lose weight for self-image as well as health. I need to make it a high priority and exercise self-control with food.

I need to lose 25 pounds by 6:30.

What are some strategies that have worked for others to help change habits?

- Twelve-step groups: Twelve step groups, while best known for their success in helping people let go of an addiction to alcohol, are now being used to successfully address other addictions. Your local newspaper will have a listing of such groups in your area.
- Support groups: There are numerous support groups available that are designed to help individuals give up specific addictions. The support from others who are trying to let go of a similar habit is very valuable. In addition, support groups are the source of good information, new ideas and even new supporters. These groups may be sponsored by hospitals, health maintenance organizations or mental health centers and are often free of charge.
- Written records of goals and progress toward meeting those goals: Many people find that developing short term goals ("baby steps") and keeping a daily record of progress is a valuable asset in letting go of an addictive habit. A simple spiral notebook works very well. You can use a form like the one that follows, or develop a form of your own. This form is for smoking but it can be modified for any addiction.

Smoking Reduction Record

Date

Goal for the day

Morning

___ # of cigarettes smoked

___ #less than previous day

Diversiory strategies that helped

How I felt

Afternoon

___ # of cigarettes smoked

___ #less than previous day

Diversiory strategies that helped

How I felt

Evening

___ # of cigarettes smoked

___ #less than previous day

Diversiory strategies that helped

How I felt

Goal for tomorrow

When you have achieved your daily goals for a length of time determined by you, for instance one week with half as many cigarettes as when you began or two weeks with no sweet snacks, reward yourself by buying yourself something special you have been wanting, or treating yourself to a movie or some other event.

A food record includes a listing of everything you ate, how much you ate, when you ate it, why you ate it and how you felt when you ate it. This record could also include exercise.

One woman reported that she was having little success losing the fifteen pounds that her doctor recommended as part of a prescription for overall wellness. She knew that the extra weight was decreasing her energy and contributing to ongoing pain in her knees and hips. She began keeping daily records of everything she ate. When she reviewed her findings she realized for the first time that she was eating more food than she thought she was. She hadn't taken into account the nibble here and the nibble there. This realization got her on the right track and she is slowly but consistently losing the weight.

After you have recorded what you eat for a week or so, use the information you have learned to set up short term goals that will serve as a guide along your journey.

Working Closely with a Specialist: There are numerous health care professionals and counselors who work specifically with people who are trying to give up addictions or change poor health habits. They can advise you on the strategies and treatments that would work best for you. They can also provide you with the support that is needed to accomplish this difficult task. They have often dealt with a similar issue in their own lives. Your health insurance company or health management organization may be willing to refer you to such a specialist and cover some or all of the costs.

- **Self-Help Books:** Self-help books can guide you through the process of breaking addictive habits. The resource list in the appendix includes some of them.

- **Visualization Exercises:** Visualization exercises like those described in Chapter 11, *Focusing Your Attention Away From Your Worries*, or in the book *Visualization for Change* (Fanning, P. New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, CA: 1994) are very effective aids in helping you get rid of bad habits. The following examples can serve as a guide in developing your own visualization sequences. Use your creative senses to develop an exercise that will work for you.

Pat Fanning describes a visualization exercise that you could use if you want to lose weight and develop healthy eating habits. It begins by lying down and making yourself comfortable. You then imagine yourself going through the day in great detail, enjoying the way your body looks at the desired weight, wearing attractive new, smaller clothes, making healthy food choices, savoring the tastes of these foods, enjoying exercising, and walking with yourself through the times when you are tempted to eat the wrong foods or overeat. You could do parts of this visualization at different times of the day to help you get through difficult times.

Visualization exercises to help you give up smoking can be repeated frequently during the day. Fanning says the nonsmoking visualization needs three elements. They are 1) an example of successfully getting your needs met without smoking -- like noticing how good the food tastes and smells; 2) an image of yourself as a healthy nonsmoker; and 3) an aversive image of smoking as unpleasant -- like the smell of cigarette smoke making you queasy.

- Make a list of the reasons you engage in this habit like:
I eat:

to feel happy
to nurture myself
because I like the taste of food
to relieve stress

Make your own list of reasons why you engage in this habit.

"I _____ (habit) in order to:"

Making this list will guide you in thinking of other things you could do that meet the same need but are not bad for you, and may even be good for you. Then make a list of things you could do instead of smoking, eating, drinking, gambling, etc. For example, instead of grabbing something unhealthy to eat, you could:

- call a friend and have a chat
- write a card to someone you care about
- go for a walk
- take a few deep breaths
- write about the feelings in your diary
- work on a knitting project
- weed in the garden
- make yourself some tea
- read a book

List some things you could do instead of _____ (bad habit)

· Taking "baby steps": Getting rid of a bad habit that has persisted for years, perhaps most of your life, can feel like a daunting task. Because it seems so overwhelming, the tendency is to put it off until just the right time-- when you're not so busy, when you've gotten the house cleaned, when you've finished writing your doctoral thesis, after the kids are all through college. Actually there is no better time to do it than right now. The sooner you meet your goal, whether it is losing sixty pounds, gaining fifteen pounds, giving up alcohol, or avoiding gambling, the sooner you will be enjoying a renewed sense of health and well-being.

I weighed twenty pounds more than I needed to. This extra weight was making it difficult to recover from a chronic muscular pain condition. I set reasonable monthly goals for myself -- four pounds a month or one pound a week. When I met my monthly goal, I bought myself a piece of clothing as a treat -- a silly pair of socks or an attractive scarf. When I met my goal of twenty pounds, I bought a soft Polartec jacket that I had been coveting. The greatest reward has been diminished chronic pain. I can now cross country ski, bicycle, and hike, all activities I was afraid I would have to give up.

· Hypnosis: Study participants reported that they had let go of bad habits by seeing a trained hypnotist or through self hypnosis.

If seeing a trained hypnotist feels right to you, get recommendations from others who have used the services of a hypnotist. Make sure the hypnotist is specially trained.

There are many self-help books that teach you how to guide yourself into a trance and then repeat powerful statements that will create positive changes in the way you think and the things you do. I recommend Hypnosis for Change (Hadley, J. And Staudacher, C. (1996) Oakland CA: New Harbinger Publications.

A man in the study had been smoking since he was in his teens. Now, in his late thirties, he was acutely aware of the effects this habit was having on every aspect of his life. His skin was dry and taut. His teeth had yellowed. He was noticing some shortness of breath. His clothes smelled of cigarette smoke and he noticed yellow stains around the ceiling in his apartment. He decided to go to a hypnotist. The hypnotist discussed with him why he smoked, what need it filled in his life and why he wanted to let go of it. Then the hypnotist led him into a hypnotic state of which he has no memory. That was seven years ago. He has had no desire for a cigarette since that time.

Advanced directives

Some people relieve worry about possible short or long term health emergencies by developing advanced directives that give supporters directions on how they want to be treated and cared for in the event they lose the ability to make these decisions for themselves.

I have had recurring episodes of severe, suicidal depression in the past. When I was well I realized that, by not having an emergency plan for my supporters, I was putting my health and life at risk. Although it was hard to think of the possibility of experiencing such deep despair again, I felt it was in my best interest and in the best interest of my family and friends to develop for them a set of instructions to use as a guide in case I got very depressed again. It has helped control worry for everyone involved.

Following is a sample of an advanced directives:

Advanced Directives

Name _____ Date _____

Symptoms or circumstances that indicate to others that they need to take over full responsibility for my care and make decisions in my behalf.

1. I don't know my family members and friends.
2. I can't do the things I normally do to take care of myself and my family.
3. I do not respond to others.
4. I am unable to get out of bed.

If the above symptoms or circumstances come up, I want the following people to take over for me:

- Name Connection/role Phone number
- Amelia Jones sister 739-4637
- Tammy Searles best friend 642-7683
- Edward Frank spouse 739-4273
- Dr. Harriette Shipp physician 682-4932
- Laura Ellis nurse practitioner 682-4932

I do not want the following people involved in any way in my care or treatment:

Name Why you do not want them involved (optional)

Dr. Thomas Jones uncomfortable with his style

If my supporters disagree on what is to be done, I want my spouse to make the final decision.

List the medications you are currently using and why you are taking them.

- Synthroid in the morning for hypothyroidism
- Multivitamin in the morning

List those medications that would be acceptable to you if medications became necessary and why you would choose those.

- Darvon for pain
- Tagamet for ulcers

List those medications that should be avoided and give the reasons.

Steroids have given me severe side effects in the past

List treatments that have helped you in the past and when they should be used.

A massage always helps me feel better.

If my breast cancer recurs, chemotherapy is acceptable.

List treatments you would want to avoid.

I do not want any experimental treatments.

Set up a plan so that you can stay at home or in the community and still get the care you need.

If possible I would like to stay at home and be cared for by family members and friends who take turns providing my care.

List treatment facilities where you prefer to be treated or hospitalized if that becomes necessary.

I would want to go either to Vermont General Hospital or Franklin Health Center

List treatment facilities you want to avoid.

I would want to avoid being a patient at the Country Convalescent Home or the Tamworth Community Hospital.

List those things that others can do for you that would help you feel better.

Others can:

play me popular music from my compact disc collection

give me a back rub

read to me from the poetry books on the shelf by my bed

serve me healthy, wholesome foods with no dairy or sugar

hug me

tell me what is going on

List those things you need others to do for you and who you want to do what.

What I need done Who I'd like to do it

- Pay my bills my son Tom
- Keep the house clean, water

- my plants, buy the groceries my sister Susan
- Take care of the pets my daughter Patti
- Pick up and sort the mail my friend Sue

List those things that others might do, or have done in the past, that would not help or might even make the situation worse. Forcing me to do things Chattering incessantly Playing rock music

I developed this plan on (date) February 2, 1997 with the help of Edward Frank.

Any plan with a more recent date supersedes this one.

Signed _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Attorney _____ Date _____

Once you have developed an Advanced Directives, give copies to all the people who would be involved in your care. Keep one copy in your file and let others know where to find it.

You can use the following form to develop your advanced directives. Once you have developed an Advanced Directives, give copies to all the people who would be involved in your care. Keep one copy in your file and let others know where to find it. Update the form as your condition changes. If you have access to a computer, inputting this form can ease the process of making changes.

Advanced Directives

Symptoms or circumstances that indicate to others that they need to take over full responsibility for my care and make decisions in my behalf.

If the above symptoms or circumstances come up, I want the following people to take over for me.

Name Connection/role Phone number

I do not want the following people involved in any way in my care or treatment:

Name Why you do not want them involved (optional)

If my supporters disagree on what is to be done, I want _____ to make the final decision.

List of medications I am currently using and why I am taking them.

List of medications that would be acceptable to me if medications became necessary and why or when I would choose those.

List of medications that should be avoided and the reasons.

List of treatments that have helped me in the past and when they should be used.

List of treatments I would want to avoid.

Plan so that I can stay at home or in the community and still get the care I need.

List of treatment facilities where I prefer to be treated or hospitalized if that becomes necessary.

List of treatment facilities I want to avoid.

List of things that others can do for me that would help me feel better.

List of things I need others to do for me and who I want to do what.

What I need done Who I'd like to do it

List of things that others might do, or have done in the past, that would not help or might even make the situation worse.

I developed this plan on (date) _____ with the help of _____

Any plan with a more recent date supersedes this one.

Signed _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Attorney _____ Date _____

Protecting Yourself from Illnesses

Worry can be relieved by taking precautions that protect us from some chronic and acute illnesses. Some prudent guidelines that are in the best interest of all of us include:

- Wash your hands with soap before meals, after toileting and at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Take echinacea (an herbal immune system booster) before being in crowded or confined spaces
- Maintain adequate fluid intake.
- Keep life stress at a manageable level
- Limit the intake of sugar, salt and fats.
- Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Take multivitamin preparations with extra vitamins E and C.
- Assess personal or genetic risk factors and take steps to minimize the susceptibility to these factors.
- For women, do monthly breasts exams and having mammograms at intervals recommended by your physician.
- For men, have regular prostate examinations.
- Wear protective clothing when in natural areas where poison ivy or oak, snake bites, insect and ticks might be a problem. Inspect your body for ticks after being outdoors. Since AIDS became a major health hazard in the early 1980's, there are health precautions that need to be taken by anyone in vulnerable position. These include:
 - Avoid contact with the body fluids of others. If you work in a job where this is not possible, wear latex gloves and goggles or mask if needed.
 - Avoid using intravenous needles that have been used by others.

- Use a condom or other barrier type protection when having sex if you are not in a monogamous relationship, or if you or your partner have had other sexual partners since testing for AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Relieve worry about AIDs by getting an AIDS test through your physician or anonymous testing by a local health agency or AIDS project. Inform others about the risks of AIDS by sharing brochures that are available through your physician or through AIDS Awareness projects! Nationwide.

Worries related to safety

Worry about issues related to safety affect all of us. I worry every time I go up in a plane, when I am traveling on icy roads and when I am walking in unfamiliar neighborhoods. A friend found an interesting way to control his worry when we were driving over some icy country roads in a snow storm. He had a bag of fresh lemons with him that he was going to give as a gift to the woman we were going to see. He cut open one of the lemons and ate it on the trip (he was in the back seat). It totally diverted his attention away from the icy roads and he arrived at our destination in good spirits.

Community Safety

Many women in the study said that, because they are not as strong as men, and because they are often the victims of crime, they worry about being the victim of violence. Their worry was echoed by gay men and lesbians who fear being the victims of hate crimes.

Being female forces me to worry about being alone in the woods or in parking garages, etc.

Sometimes I worry about being vulnerable to the will of someone stronger than I am, especially if I perceive bad motives.

Being female affects my feelings of being threatened for my safety (rape, mugging)

I think, as a woman, I worry more about my physical safety than men. I believe I would think a lot more about walking city streets alone at night than a man would.

Because of my sexual preference (gay man) I feel vulnerable to a hate crime.

What do people do to relieve their worries about being the victim of violence?

- · avoid high risk places or go there only in the company of others with whom you feel comfortable
- · make a mental plan of what you would do to protect yourself if you were attacked
- · keep a key between your fingers to gouge an attacker when you feel at risk
- · carry mace or a whistle
- · walk in a self confident manner, projecting self assurance while being aware of the surroundings
- · honor your feelings -- if something feels unsafe, take precautions
- · walk with a dog
- · take a class or course in self protection; learn self protection techniques
- · keep your car doors locked, whether you are in the car or not
- · check in the back seat of the car before you drive off
- · have your key in your hand ready to unlock doors when you get there

One woman surveyed feels uneasy when her husband is away overnight. She worries about the possibility of intruders. She and her husband have worked together to relieve her worry by installing a high quality security system and motion sensitive lighting around the outside of their home.

Another woman said:

- Once I lived in a "bad" section of a large city and was afraid to go out at night. Living in a city I learned to walk with an attitude and purpose and energetically shield myself.

To help keep yourself safe at home:

- · have a reliable system of locks for doors and windows and, if necessary, a security system-some city dwellers feel more comfortable with strong, locked wrought iron gates
- · keep the area around your home well lighted.
- · stay in close contact with neighbors and keep their phone numbers handy.
- · work with neighbors to watch for suspicious people or activities in your neighborhood.

A woman in the study said:

- I have an alarm on the house that I set at night which makes me feel very safe.

A young mother said:

- I never leave my son alone without knowing that neighbors are home. Emergency phone numbers are posted by the phone.

Another woman reported that:

- Sometimes we worry about somebody breaking in. (We live right off a public golf course.) We really don't do much. We put a broom stick in the sliding glass door. We've talked about adding more lights in the back. Also we've talked about getting a security system but I doubt we will.

Is there anything you could do or want to do to help relieve your worry about being the victim of violence or criminal activity?

Preventing Accidents or Injury In The Home

There are many simple, common sense precautions which may ease our worry about safety by giving us some "handles" -- actions to address the underlying concern:

- having someone around when involved in a dangerous activity like cleaning the chimneys or breaking ice off the roof
- keeping walking areas and stairs cleared
- closing drawers when not in use
- keeping cleaning supplies stored out of reach of children
- turning pot handles on the stove inward so the pot can't be knocked off the stove

- keeping ladders, stools, chairs and railings in good repair
- avoiding the use of scatter rugs that slip
- having smoke detectors and a carbon monoxide detector; checking that they are in working order
- having electrical systems checked and upgraded

Is there anything you could do or want to do in your home or workplace that would reduce worry about possible accidents?

Travel Safety

A man in the study said:

Since I travel a lot, mostly on weekends, that's a bit to worry about. Especially since I travel to metropolitan areas. I try to drive consciously, carefully. In this case the worry is good, because it keeps me focused when driving. And I don't think I worry excessively about this, where it might cross the line. If it reached excessiveness, I'd look for something else to make a living.

Using common sense can help relieve worry when traveling:

- wear your seat belt whenever the vehicle is in motion
- avoid drinking when driving and don't drive when using medications that may impair your ability to drive safely
- avoid riding with anyone who has been drinking
- avoid riding with anyone you feel is not a safe driver
- avoid driving as much as possible when there are poor road conditions and/or when traffic is heavy
- maintain a speed that is appropriate to road conditions
- take a break from driving if you feel less than alert
- keep your vehicle in good repair
- take a safe driving or defensive driving course
- keep the car doors locked when driving
- maintain control of your personal safety if you see a dangerous situation, even if you think someone else (the driver in your or another car) is probably alert to it

Is there anything else you could do to minimize the worry of getting in an accident when traveling?
